1:Beals E-5 (1940-1941)1946 NU34 Tarasco NU34

535 other (fig. 16). Occasionally each pair of
796 *negritos* will walk to the head of the line and back while the two recite their part of the *relato*.

535 The teaching of the *relato* and of the dance
● 538 is done by a specialist hired for the occasion by the *carguero*. The best-known specialist is
796 Gregorio Castillo, although he was not hired in 1940. Castillo also teaches the dance of the *viejos*, *Europeos* or *Españoles*, as he prefers to call it, and was hired to teach the group in 1941. He had been teaching the dances for 28 years (in 1940). His *relatos* he wrote himself. He secured many *relatos* locally and also sent to Mexico City and Guadalajara for others, but he liked none of them. (But several people said they were very tired of Castillo's *relatos*, which have been the same for 20 years and which they felt were not very good anyway.) Castillo feels that the *negrito* dance is especially fine and that the *negritos* of Cherán are superior to any he has seen in other towns. The only time he admits having seen a better dance than that of Cherán was once when Aranza borrowed his *relato* and had especially elaborate costumes. Nahuatzen *negritos* have a better dress than those of Cherán, but they are no longer trained.

Castillo, perhaps because it is not in his field, believes the *pastorela* to be a very inferior performance. It is, he says, merely a lot of children dressed up prettily but knowing neither their lines nor their dance. The *negrito*, on the other hand, is a nice clear *relato*, all divided into acts, and the performers are old enough to learn their parts.

Castillo's *relatos* are, naturally, part of his stock in trade. While he was cooperative and willing to permit them to be copied, he would do so only at a price commensurate with their value to him. This price seemed more than they would be worth as documents, particularly

[Text continues on p. 146a]

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535 as it is evident that they contain much literary
538 echo and perhaps are almost entirely derived
796 from literary sources. As considerable portions of the *relatos* were secured from Agustín Rangel, assistant on the project, who participated in both dances in 1940–41, it was felt the expense of securing the complete *relatos* was not warranted.

535 The following is the *relato* of Agustín
796 Rangel for the *negrito* dance (spelling as given,
539 but punctuation added):

First act: Music, followed by a song

Tu tienes! oh! Niño, las adelfas y las Rosas,
Aun en boton, con purpura brillante.
Las Azuceñas puras y olorosas
Colores en su tallo vacilante,
Las amapolas frescas y pomposas,
Se Abren, Señor, bajo tu mano amante.
Y del tomillo en las pequeñas ramas
Mil flores hermosísimas derramas.

Second act: Music, followed by a song

Second caminata, or walking figure

(during which several speak; Agustin's part is as follows:)

Bellísimo Niño de amor y de ternura,
Divina criatura,
Te doy mi cariño . . .
(Second speaking part:)
Haces crecer el Cedro en las montañas
Y el sauce a la orrilla del torrente,
Do nacen los helechos y las cañas
Y las yervas mil en la estación ardiente
De la tierra fecundas las Entrañas
Con el Calor y el agua dulcemente
Y asi los campos de verdor revistas
Tornando alegres los que fueron tristes.

Third act: Music, followed by a song

Con gusto y con amor a ofrecer passemos
Felices ya seremos nacido el Salvador.

(The following is sung as they pretend to make offerings):

Ante tus plantas postrado
Te ofrece aqui este negrito
Recibe me niño amado
Este fino Silloncito.

Fourth act: A dance

Fifth act: Music, followed by a song and the "farewell"

Adios, Niño Santo,
Con suelo y amor;
Escucha mi canto
Niño Salvador.
Benedice toditos,

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[p. 146]

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Divino Creador.
Se van los negritos
Y llevan tu amor.

TRANSLATION LINE BY LINE

Thou hast, oh Child, the rosebays and the roses,
Still in bud with brilliant purple.
The white lilies, pure and fragrant,
Colors in their waving stems,
The calm and pompous poppies,
They open, Lord, beneath Thy loving hand
And from the small branches of the thyme
Scatterest Thou a thousand beautiful blossoms.

Act 2

Lovely Child of love and of tenderness,
Divine creature,
I give you my love.
Thou causest the cedar in the mountains to grow,
And the willow at the brink of the torrent,
Where the bracken and the canes grow,
And the thousand herbs of the warm season,
From the entrails of the fecund earth
With the heat and the sweet water,
And thus the fields you dress anew with verdure,
Turning gay those who were sad.

Act 3

With pleasure and with love we go to make
offerings,
Happy that now the Savior has been born for us.
Prostrate before your feet
This *negrito* offers Thee,
Receive from me, beloved Child,
This fine little saddle.

Act 5

Farewell, Holy Child,
Comfort and love,
Hear my song,
Child Savior.
Bless everyone,
Divine Creator.
The *negritos* go
And take with them your love.

Fragments of other *relatos* remembered by Agustín are the following (given in English):

The Holy Child is born in a beautiful arcade in Bethlehem.
I have come to see your birth and to adore Thee.
Guided by a star, the *negritos* have come to witness the birth.

(Following this each told where he came from and the gift he brought: A little burro, a horse, a saddle, a dog, and different playthings.)

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The main part of the *relato* is recited by a person known as *el letra* and another called *el segundo*. These two stand at the head of the

535 two files, except for the little girls at that end of
538 the lines. When the recitation begins, *el*
796 *letra* steps forward alone and recites his part, returning to his place when finished. There is then a *caminata*, the files walking in a circle. *El segundo* then does the same, followed by a *caminata*.

The *negrito* dancers begin to learn their parts about a month befcre December 25. For several evenings before the date they meet in the house of the *carguero* and rehearse. The procedures beginning the night of December 24 are described as follows in an account written by Agustín Rangel:

The *negritos* started to dance about 9:00 p.m. at the *carguero's* house. There were lots of people and about 10:30 the candlemaker came to sell candles. The *negritos* finished dancing about 10:30 p.m. Then they were given supper and they sat around for a while. They were waiting for the bell to ring from the church. The bells were supposed to ring three times, first for the Holy Child to start for the church, second when the Holy Child was supposed to be half way from the *carguero's* house and the church, and third, when the Holy Child was at the door of the church to be blessed before going inside the church. There was a 12 a. m. Mass. The priest of the church came over to the *carguero's* house before the Holy Child left the house. The priest went with the Holy Child up to the church where he blessed the Holy Child before going inside the church. Lots of people went to the 12 a. m. Mass. [Note: There were several hundred persons in the [373] procession, all with candles. The streets and houses were all lit up by the candles. In some towns it is said that pitch pine torches are carried and give even more light.]

December 25. Today the *negritos* started to dance about 9 o'clock in the morning. First they went to Mass and there they danced after the Mass. Then they came to the *carguero's* house to eat dinner. After dinner they went to church again to visit the Holy Child. Then they went home again to the *carguero's* house where they danced again. Then they went to the night Mass. After the night Mass they went inside the patio of the priest's house and danced before him. After they finished dancing, they danced in front of the municipal building before the mayor and officials. After they finished dancing there they went to the *carguero's* house to eat supper. They ate supper and every one of the *negritos* was free to go home.

December 26. Today the *negritos* started to dance first at the *carguero's* house after they had eaten breakfast. After they finished dancing at the *carguero's* house, they went to the Calvary, where they danced. After they finished there they went to Paricutin (*barrio IV*) where they danced at a house. I don't know what saint is there. Then they went to the house

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[p.147b]

535 of the *carguero* of the Three Kings, where they danced in the afternoon. Then they went to eat at the
538 *carguero's* house. After they finished eating dinner, they danced and then went to the house of the new
796 *carguero* for the Holy Child where they danced until the evening. Then they came back to the *carguero's* house to eat supper. Then they separated after supper.

December 27. This morning they danced at the *carguero's* house and then they went to the house of the *carguero* of San Isidro. From there they went to the house of [the *carguero* of] San Rafael. Then they went to the *carguero's* house for dinner, after which they danced. From there they went to the priest's house where they danced in front of the priest. Then they danced in front of Don Emilio's store where they were given fruit.

UNORGANIZED CHRISTMAS DANCES

535 A number of dance groups often appear at or
796 before Christmas. Collectively they are known as the *melebris*, the masqueraders. Formerly, they appeared about 10 days before Christmas Eve and then appeared every third night until December 24. Of recent years they have been forbidden because the various groups often arrived at the same house and then they would fight. In 1940 a few masqueraders were out but they went mainly to houses in their own *barrio* for fear the police might catch them.

Three types of dancers appear. First are the čúrikua anápu turíča or sakíč, "the negroes who go out at night." This group wears ordinary clothing but with the crown of the hat decorated with cut papers representing ribbons streaming out behind. Dancers of this group also wear paper ornaments on the front and back of their clothing. They have guitar and drum music and dance a *zapateada*, that is, a sort of *jarabe tapatio* dance.

The second group is the t'aɪé aríriča, the dancing old men. The word "aɪi" also means a person who talks too much and who certainly does not speak the truth. This group dresses
[532] like old men; the members wear a long overcoat and a black wooden mask with the beard represented. The masks are similar to those worn by the negroes of Uruapan. Some of the dancers are also dressed as women. They have five or six stringed instruments. No data were collected on the type of dance.

The third group is the apáčiča or the *salvajes* or *negritos salvajes* (Apaches, savages, or negro savages). They paint their faces to resemble the negrito masks but wear no masks. Rooster

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[p. 1526]

The Offering

535 I see Thee on humble straw
535 And I prostrate myself instantly,
539 I adore Thee, loving Child,
796 And I offer Thee these little shells.
(The dance is asked for when the offerings are ended.)

Dance

Well, we all are pleased,
Now we have seen your birth,
And all are pleased
Because we will be happy.
Child God, beautiful portent,
Together we all go
To put an end to the visit.
Moreover in our hearts
All faithful we carry Thee.
Never, never forget us,
Today all tell Thee,
Until the coming year,
But all with joy,
Now we have seen your marvels;
Oh, little Child Savior,
Permit us great Lord,
That with pleasure we dance for Thee
Some joyous quadrilles.
In such happy moments,
I say "farewell companions."
Let the instruments play
And the lowland tunes . . . [Meaning not clear—possibly *abajeños* is meant, not *abajemos*, that is, "tunes of the low country."]

After the song, music is played

Now we take ourselves away
From the Sacred place.
Weeping [?] we go,
Oh! beloved Jesus.

535 The style of delivery of these *relatos* was highly declamatory and monotonous. The 538 words were spoken in a level tone without 796 inflection or other interpretation of their meaning.

The sense of a few of the other individual *relatos* was secured. One dancer said he was very old, so old he couldn't walk on level ground. If he couldn't walk on level ground, how was he going to walk downhill? Nevertheless, he was going to the place of the Holy Child anyway. Another said that if he got tired walking, he would go on his knees to visit the Child, even though they were scratched. Yet another complained of his high squeaky voice, but even if his voice gave out, he still would go to the Holy

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535 796 [538] [626] Child. The performer with the latter lines was the only one who managed to make the crowd laugh. The remainder were greeted in silence or by asides criticizing their performance, especially several who had not learned their lines very well.

The dancers practiced at the house of the *carguero* of the Three Kings on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. The *carguero* provided food for all the performers. The ceremonies proper began on Sunday in the late afternoon. The following is the account of the proceedings as written by Agustín Rangel.

January 5, 1941. On Sunday we started for the Calvary from the house of the *carguero* at about 5 p. m. The Three Kings went on horseback. At the Calvary the Three Kings took the star (a star on the end of the pole). The King in the middle took the star and the Kings on either side took hold of a ribbon tied on each side. Then we started for the *carguero's* house where we were supposed to take the saint to the church. At the church we left the saint where a vespers was given for it. Then we started for the *carguero's* house where we danced. Then supper was served. Before we left, the *carguero* told us that on the next morning we had to be at his house about 6:30 a. m. [According to one informant, customarily the group should have danced at the church.]

January 6. I arrived at the *carguero's* house about 6:00 a. m. After a little, they told me to go around on some of the streets with the musicians and tell the other guys to hurry up and get over to the *carguero's* house. When the bell rang for the long Mass we all left for church. After the long Mass the priest told us we could not dance until after the Rosary. We then left for the *carguero's* house where we ate breakfast. After breakfast we danced at the *carguero's* house. We did nothing all day until after the Rosary. We went to the Rosary; after we came out we danced in the priest's house, then we danced in front of the church. After that we danced in front of the municipal building. From there we went to the house of the new *carguero* of the Holy Child where we danced and we were given oranges after we danced. Then we went home (to the *carguero's* house) where we danced before eating supper. Then we went home and were told to be at the *carguero's* house about 7:00 a. m.

January 7. On this morning we went to the church after the Mass. We were to take the Holy Kings to the house of the new *carguero*. We started from the church and we headed for the new *carguero's* house where we arrived and left it [the images] there. They told us to sit down and we were given *atole de cacao* (black atole). We danced before the atole was served and after that we left for the *carguero's* house to eat breakfast. After breafast we headed for the Calvary where we danced. Then we headed for Bruno Gaspar's house

291 unmarried girls put the brightest outside; married women wear the darkest outside.

521 517 Undoubtedly the greatest amusement in Cherán is simply talking. Both men and women gather in their spare time and talk by the hour. Most of the talk is gossip. Who has recently done what, the price of corn, the condition of the crops, the change in the weather, forthcoming events, the problems of the church, the progress of the war, what one would do if the Germans came to Cherán—all the everyday things of life and a great deal of speculation about the unknown form subjects of conversation. The North American members of the staff found two questions most common in 1940 and 1941—what were the chances of getting work if one went to the United States, especially since the rearmament program, and what did we think of the progress of the war. Particularly on the subject of the war and its economic repercussions for Cherán did men seem surprisingly well-informed, considering the few who read and the scarcity of newspapers.

538 With all the talk that goes on in Cherán for amusement's sake, one would expect to find an important repertory of tales. This is not the case. No doubt one could collect a body of tales if one cultivated the older people assiduously. The tales that were found were few, and the majority of them circled about hidden treasure. In addition, there were a few dealing with supernatural happenings and some fragments about the founding of Cherán. Even these prosaic stories had to be sought for diligently and were told badly and in obviously incomplete form. Most persons questioned could not recall any specific occasion on which tales had been told, nor did they know any stories themselves. Story telling is not a significant part of the culture of Cherán.

OLD AGE

887 886 The transition from adult to old age is not a clear one in Cherán. In general, parents whose children are all grown up, married, and moved away from home are not necessarily "old" by Cherán standards. At least one individual apparently over 80 years old was encountered who still did his own farm work, was completely self-supporting, and an inde-

2:Carrasco E-4, 5 (1945)1952
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4 RELIGIOUS IDEOLOGY AND SOCIAL CONFLICT

it also sanctions the national values of the Church. Political conflict mentioned in folklore seems to reflect almost exclusively the conservative point of view. Religious people can put it to use to point out the wisdom of following their party and to present the opponent as wicked.

The tendencies which are disrupting the folk culture do not create a new body of folklore. Even religious people, like the sinarquistas, allied to the church, keep only that part of the religion which is more orthodox, and neglect that which is purely folk. Here, as with the agraristas, changes in the religious ideology and folklore do not create a new folklore but induce changes in the *function* of the old, leading to obsolescence. The different attitudes of belief will consequently be considered.[1]

Main Traits of Tarascan Religious Ideology

In contrast to what is reported for other Mexican folk cultures[2] the Tarascans do not classify their folk narratives into well defined types according to the story's characters or the didactical or recreative use of the tale. All tales are called *uandáŋekua*, (from *uandáni*, to tell, to speak; in Spanish, *cuento*). Sometimes, at least in Jarácuaro, the Spanish word (pronounced *kuéntu*) is used in Tarascan discourse. Its meaning, however, seems to be synonymous with *uandáŋekua*. Everything which is told can be called a tale. This does not mean of course that all narratives are of the same type; it means only that Tarascan culture and language do not recognize standard categories of tales. Different types are to some extent recognized in that some are told as true experiences, usually giving concrete place and personal names, while in others the action takes place in unnamed places and among unknown people. Informants are themselves aware of this possible distinction. Sometimes the word *uandáŋekua* (or *kuéntu*) is

1. This chapter is based almost exclusively on the author's field work. A complete field report will contain a full collection of tales. As this is not yet published, references to it are not possible. Most information comes from Jarácuaro, a strongly religious and conservative village, with sinarquismo as the dominant tendency.
2. M. Redfield, 1930.

2:Carrasco E-4, 5 (1945)1952
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used in a more restricted sense to mean fictitious tale as opposed to a true event, while in other cases it can mean anything which is told, including real events. There is no provision, however, for classifying narratives other than to state whether a given tale is considered true or false, and on this point not everybody agrees. One can hear about a given tale a comment like "This is true, it really happened", or "This is what people say, but who knows if it is true." These comments can be heard with all types of tales. The word *cuento* can enter these explanations with different meanings. For instance, on being asked to tell a story (cuento), a man would tell of his experiences during the Revolution, or another would tell how he got lost on a dark night. The following statement was added after a wonder story: "This is not a tale *(cuento)*, this is fiction *(farsa)*." Also in similar situations: "This is not true; it is only a tale (*cuento*)." Thus *cuento* or *uandánekua* applies to everything told, and can mean both a true or a false tale according to the context.

Yet the folk narratives of the Tarascans can be classified into the following main types: myths, experiences with supernaturals, and wonder stories.

Myths are tales referring to events in the far past when the world had not yet its present shape. The characters are mostly supernatural. There are included tales of the creation of the world, the destruction of the world, and associated events, stories of people living before the advent of Christianity, and the shaping of the world as it is today.

Another very common type of story concerns experiences with the supernaturals. These include experiences with saints, devils, the dead and witches; miracles of saints; cases of men who have seen the Devil or have made a pact with him in order to gain money or knowledge; how people have seen ghosts on a dark night; how a man comes back to life after a serious illness and reports his travel to the underworld; cases of witchcraft; how a sick man was cured of sorcery; how witches take animal form; how a given witch was caught. All these and many more of similar nature are among the stories most often related. All these stories are practically always told giving the names of the places and persons involved. Tales of this sort can be told as current or past events in the town: e.g., cases of

538 witchcraft, how So-and-So got his wealth by making a pact with the Devil, or how X brought a diviner to find out the person responsible for the burning of his house.

When people come back from a trip, they often bring stories of this type. They will come back from market telling how the Devil was seen in X town. The latest miracle of a saint will be told after a pilgrimage. Narratives of this type are really pieces of news relating to the supernaturals.

Myths and experiences with the supernatural, by the very nature of their content, are told as true events or at least as something which some people believe and tell as true happenings. Any attitude of doubt in these stories often indicates doubt of the religious concept behind the story. On the other hand, some tales, which are experiences with supernaturals (mainly stories of saints or of men pledged to the Devil), can be told as fiction, with no concrete names being given, for mere entertainment, and without indicating any lack of religious belief on the part of the teller.

In such cases these tales merge somewhat with wonder stories. These are tales in which action takes place in unspecified times and places and among unnamed people. They are mostly the wonder stories of European tradition. Whereas in the experiences with the supernaturals the action is always in agreement with actual Tarascan culture—in fact they are case histories of some aspect of Tarascan culture—in the wonder stories the cultural content of the tale is sometimes incongruous with actual Tarascan culture. The characters are often kings and princesses, old men who have magical powers, and heroes who use charms which have no correspondence in living Tarascan culture and which appear only in these tales.

These tales are not told as news, as are the experiences with the supernatural, but mainly for entertainment. Most informants consider them fictitious, but this is by no means the only attitude found. Doubt is quite common: "Who knows if this story is true!" In some cases informants think they are true events which took place in some remote past time. Cultural incongruity causes no inconvenience. After all, the towns were known to have been ruled by kings in the olden times; land titles often mention their names. And many people agree that the ancients had

2:Carrasco E-4, 5 (1945)1952
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538 greater magical knowledge and were stronger, braver, and cleverer than the modern people.

These are the main types of narratives. Animal stories are another common type, similar to the Æsopian fable. They are considered fictitious and are told for their entertainment value. Usually they are funny and meant to make people laugh. When asked for tales (meaning fiction) many informants think most readily of this kind of story. Other types of tales, such as jokes, sexy stories, etc., are less common and are not used in this work as they do not reflect religious concepts.

771 538 Religious ideas are also expressed in what in Spanish are called beliefs (*creencias*): items of lore giving bits of knowledge of the supernatural, as, for instance, omens or the wondrous qualities of certain animals. Sometimes these beliefs treat of a special behavior; for example, the rules about what a pregnant woman should or should not do, or the magical procedures to follow in a technological activity. These beliefs are to some people rules which have to be followed. For many people, however, they are just sayings one does not have to care about. They say, "This is just a belief," meaning "Some people say that, but it is not true."

538 Thus, folk narratives, an expression of the religious ideas of the people, can mean different things to different people. To those to whom a given tale is a true happening, it has a moral meaning and may sanction a certain kind of behavior. The same happening or tale may be to others an example of how superstitious people are. It will have no moral meaning, sanction, or behavior, although it may be told as an entertaining tale or piece of information.

538 979 The religious ideology expressed through such narratives will now be examined at its face value, while the different attitudes of belief will later be discussed.

* * *

The general concepts of Tarascan folklore and religion are those of Catholicism. The Christian God created the world and the supernaturals, including the Devil and the saints. The fundamental Christian concept of good and evil is also paramount in Tarascan folklore and religion. This opposition of good and evil appears in a number of contrasts. Everything is classified as one or the other: God and the saints, the good supernaturals who inhabit

538 heaven, are opposed to the bad supernaturals, the Devil and the demons in hell;
779 the right Religion and the Church are set against superstition and lack of religion; good behavior against bad (sin); the idea of the good going to heaven at death against that of the sinful being punished in hell.

577 Ethical values are apparent in the reasons given for the destruction of the world
538 and the creation of the Devil, in the actions
[779] of the saints in rewarding good behavior and punishing evil, in the acts of the Devil in sponsoring bad behavior, and in the destiny of the dead.

Taking this concept of good and evil as the main theme, we can give an outline of practically the whole, and certainly the most important part, of Tarascan religious ideas. Nonethical concepts are few and of secondary importance. They are mainly miscellaneous beliefs or tales (in which some natural elements are personified), omens, and so on.

773 Creation stories are not common among the Tarascans. In those collected, the con-
538 cept of good and evil is apparent. The duality of the supernatural—God and the
577 saints against the Devil—is explained as the consequence of the bad behavior of one of the sons of God who revolted against his Father and was punished by being made into the Devil. Insubordination and lack of respect for paternal authority are the causes of this punishment.

In several myths about the creation of animals, the good animals are created by God while the bad ones are related to the Devil. Thus, when Jesus and the chil-
[825] dren of the Devil play making mud figures, those of Jesus become birds while those of the Devil become "snakes and lizards, and scorpions and all sorts of bad animals". The coyote was a dog which deserted his master, the Devil.

773 Most important are the myths regarding the destruction of the world. In these we
538 have a blend of Spanish and Indian elements in which the Indian motives, nonethical in origin, are reinterpreted and subordinated to the Catholic concept of Good and Evil. A number of stories give two destructions of the world. A first one by water is identified with the Christian flood, although it keeps also some traits of the Mesoamerican flood myth; and a second by fire embodies Indian traits but is identified with the advent of Christianity and the Spanish conquest. Some ver-

2:Carrasco E-4, 5 (1945)1952
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538 sions, however, give only one destruction
773 of the world, equating the flood with the advent of Christianity, or depriving this last event of its catastrophic character.

Flood stories include a typical Mesoamerican tale—that the survivor of the flood was transformed into a dog because he started a fire. Since the cause of the transformation was disobedience to the Christian God, who had forbidden starting a fire without his command, the story thus becomes integrated with the good and evil theme:

[539] ". . . down came the angel and kicked him once and again and said, 'This is so that you understand. You have not obeyed me.' And the man began to cry like a dog and the angel said, 'You will be a dog and in punishment you will have to take care of the house.' And this is why there are dogs."

Several stories and beliefs deal with the *k'uaŋári*, or giants, the people who lived before the advent of Christianity. The k'uaŋári had very great strength. They built what are now the ruins of pre-Spanish sites, and also are supposed to have built the churches and installed the bells; bells were their most precious treasure. They did not believe in the true religion but worshipped idols and stones:

[539] "The ancient people killed people when they had a fiesta and made a feast over that body. That was their custom. They also killed an ox and then they ate it. They covered it with flowers and there they made their fiesta. With the fat of the animal they made candles which they lit for their idols."

The kings of the k'uaŋári set the boundaries of the existing towns and placed the border stones. Some of their deeds are still remembered. They named the towns, they left their imprints on a number of stones, and made war on neighboring kings. The point stressed in the stories is the destruction of these beings because of their lack of religion: they were "unbaptized humans" or "big devils". In order to put an end to this state of affairs, God decided to bless the world. This event is described in some tales as a destruction by fire, in others by water, in the latter case being identified either with the flood or with the formation of Lake Pátzcuaro.

The stories in which the giants are alive before the flood attribute the destruction of the world to their heathenness:

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539 which the people had to suffer. Then God gave His permission and the Devil made the volcano at once."

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"In the plain where the volcano burst forth there was a cross which the missionary fathers had buried because there was a danger in that plain. A man from Parícutin was working that land; when he was plowing he saw the cross. He did not approve of it, he called a friend, dug, and took an arm from the cross; he chopped it off. Inside was a golden cross to keep the volcano from breaking forth. They took it out and broke a wooden cross which was on top of the golden one and the agraristas burned it. Then the volcano erupted. They say that because the people from Parícutin were so bad and broke the cross, the volcano broke out. Before the volcano broke out, little figures were seen dancing, city-clothed people (*catrines*), and also four whirlwinds. Dionisio was getting close and felt the earth was hot so he said, 'Now it is going to break out; I better go.' And he heard a noise, *fu*! and smoke came out. When he arrived home it was already roaring."

• • • •

"Once when the people of Parícutin had a land dispute with those of San Juan, a priest had told the people to gather a lot of money and bury it there. So he put the money and on top of it a cross and he blessed it because he said that to him who hurt the cross or took the money out, God would send a punishment. Some agraristas felled the cross with an axe and took the money. Shortly thereafter the volcano broke out. And that is the reason."

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"The volcano appeared because the agraristas from Parícutin had felled a cross which had Holy Hosts inside. The cross was placed by a missionary father that same year so that no water snake [tornado] would fall there. They felled it and, the day after, the volcano was there."

668 798 538 The political conflict and the agrarista anticlericalism have thus produced an increase in the use of some themes of the traditional religious ideology, namely those which point out the wickedness of the people who oppose the Church and the cult.

On the subject of cargos the folk ideology maintains that they are necessary in order to enter heaven. However, we did not find this belief elaborated upon by the more traditional people in opposition to the militant Catholics who reject the car-

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668 798 538 gos.[4] Conversely, the militant Catholics do not seem to use folk ideas in order to argue their stand; we simply find disbelief in the idea that the cargos have supernatural sanctions. These Catholics are supported by their priest who holds the same views.

Full agrarista material is lacking, for our collection was gathered in conservative villages. A volcano story was told by an agrarista from Charapan who had taken refuge in Cocucho. The tale demonstrates belief in religion and clearly condemns fiestas, making them the cause for the volcano, instead of blaming the agraristas as do most other stories. The agrarista policy of suppressing fiestas finds in this story a neat ideological justification:

539 "A bearded man appeared near San Juan before the eruption had started. He found a cowboy and asked him, 'Where are you going?' 'I am looking for some oxen,' he said. 'Well, haven't you seen them where you have been?' 'No, I have not.' 'Well, look here. After all, nobody is going to take them. I want you to do an errand for me. There is a hole back there where you were. Go and step on it and you will find a man. Tell him that I need him.'

"The cowboy went there, but the hole was too small to get into, so he went back to tell the bearded man. 'Sure you can get in,' he replied. 'You just step hard on it.' The boy did so and he sank. He arrived at a big house, where he told the man there what he was ordered to say: 'A bearded man sends me to tell you that he needs you.' 'What is the matter, then?' 'I don't know. I was looking for some animals when he found me and sent me on this errand.' 'Let's go then.'

"And they went out and they arrived where the bearded man was. He said that he wanted this man from the underworld to destroy the town of San Juan before the time came for the fiesta. 'But I cannot do that!' 'Sure, you can. You must destroy the town before the holy day so that no fiesta will be made.' And so they left, and the cowboy left, too, and he found the oxen where the bearded man had told him.

The bearded man was God and the other one was the Devil. God didn't want any more fiestas in San Juan, because the poor people went there and spent so much money because everything was very expensive. Besides, they were robbed even within the Church, and so the poor people were left without any money at all. That's why God destroyed everything."

4. It should be noted that no particular effort was made to obtain them. Neither, however, was an effort made to get the anti-agrarista motives which so often appeared.

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668 538 Not enough data are available for us to say whether or not stories of this type are as common among the agraristas as the anti-agrarista motifs are frequent among the opposite party. The existing material suggests that such is not the case. Agrarista informants tell the same stories and experiences as the more conservative informants, whose stories sanction folk culture values. Their political position shows rather in the attitude with which they tell the story, one of disbelief.

* * *

771 538 Tarascan religious ideas and folklore sanction the Church and the proper observance of the cult, both in their local (folk culture) and national aspects.

The stories and case histories collected show an abundant use of religious motifs to point out the wickedness of the anti-clerical agraristas. Those stories are told from the point of view of the traditional folk culture. The militant Catholics who are partly in conflict with that folk culture also tell such stories, for they attack their agrarista adversaries and sanction allegiance to the Church with which they are closely connected. In that aspect (cargos) in which they oppose the traditional folk culture, they do not use religious motifs except in that they support the priest who denies the need for this activity. Their attitude is one of lack of belief in those traditional ideas which sanctioned the sponsorship of festivals. They, like the agraristas, show a lack of belief in the traditional concepts of folk religion.

The Ideology of the Folk Religion in Decline: Attitudes of Belief

771 The social content of the religious ideology having been examined, we can now discuss how the change in this ideology is expressed in different belief attitudes which consequently involve changes in the meaning, use and function of a given religious concept or myth. We shall find different attitudes as to belief, and we shall try to correlate them with the economic and political tendencies discussed in previous chapters. We shall see how the breaking down of a folk religion involves a change from total belief in the content of the folk religious concepts and myths, towards skepticism, disbelief, and acceptance of outside (national) opinions. This change is not gradual and uniform, but results in extreme attitudes which can be

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771 correlated with the different parties in the political conflict.

In the previously presented outline of that part of the religious ideology which is related to the concepts of good and evil, the material was arranged by the author and discussed as though it were a single body of opinion, attitude, and beliefs. Actually, what any single Indian knows and believes is not so well integrated. In reality there are great differences in the kind of material any one individual knows and is able to supply. A discussion of variability in folklore could be made in terms of individual participation in this aspect of culture; the different individuals' knowledge of folklore could be related to sex, age, status, personality, and other factors. Such a discussion is not attempted in this paper.

538 One also finds great variability in the attitude toward the folklore material any one particular individual knows. This has already been pointed out in discussing types of narratives. What to one informant may be a true happening which God allowed to take place so that men can learn how to behave, to another is a fictitious story told for fun. What some tell as powerful and true manifestations of the supernatural, others tell jokingly as something which superstitious people do and believe.

771 These different belief attitudes are related to folk and national levels of culture (particularly in religion), and to the social 668 and political groups described in previous chapters.

We have been describing the change processes in terms of three main tendencies: (1) the traditionalist — following and advocating strict adherence to the values of traditional folk culture, even to the extent of opposing the priest; (2) the agrarista (agrarian reformer)—anticlerical and the most closely connected with policies of the national government; and (3) the militant Catholic. The last, reacting against the economic and religious agrarista policies, but partially in conflict themselves with the traditional folk culture, tend to follow a more orthodox Catholicism, and in national politics, connect themselves with the Church and the sinarquista movement.

In the ideological realm, as to the question of how much people believe in the content of their folk religion, we can also describe three attitudes which correspond to the above socio-political tendencies: (1) Correlated with the traditionalist group is an attitude characterized by total belief in

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538 Mateo likes to tell long and elaborate entertainment stories. When a myth is not quite believed and becomes entertainment, wonder stories seem to be preferred. Also stories learned in school or read from books are highly appreciated. In Jarácuaro (874 inhabitants) two copies of the *Arabian Nights* were located in the possession of literate informants. Some other informants gave stories from that source, considering it among their best. Some were aware of the provenience of the story, but not others.

Experiences with the supernaturals which express this attitude of doubt are often told. Manuel, after telling of a supposed magician, says, "I wonder if this is true or if they just go around playing the suckers." Not only are some experiences doubted; one hears "false experiences" which ridicule certain beliefs. They cause great hilarity and it is to be supposed that they spread skepticism. Some examples follow:

539 771 A woman once told her brother that her husband had gone to the mountains in order to ask the Devil for money. Her brother thought, I am going to answer. He went after his brother-in-law and he heard him shouting, 'Devil, Devil. I want money.' His brother-in-law spoke to him. 'Come here then.' And when he came near to him, he beat him with a whip and he told him, 'Here you have your money.' The other fellow ran to his house and he was so ashamed that when his brother-in-law arrived he went to the attic.

• • •

A widow asks the sexton if the dead really come back at Hallowe'en, so that she can wait for her husband. The sexton instructs her to wait for him and have ready brandy and other things he liked to eat. In the night the sexton goes to the house and passes as the husband and asks for money and brandy. When he leaves he is drunk and falls asleep on the street. Next morning the woman leaves the house and finds that the man she thought was her husband has not been able to go back to the dead. She sees it is the sexton. "You damn —. This man made a fool of me." She takes a stick and beats him and the sexton runs away. And from that day she does not ask any more questions about the dead.

• • •

A boy's sweetheart gives him some food. He suspects she might be trying to bewitch him and takes the food to BA (the town's best known witch). BA tells him the food is dangerous and he keeps it to bury it. When

771 is seen not only in their behavior but also
in the fact that their ideas about cargos
668 are changing. Whereas for the traditional-
ist, cargos are a necessary service to God
[782] in order to reach heaven, some Catholics
oppose this idea. They say it is only
custom, an unnecessary expenditure of
money, not required to be a good Catholic,
and they are supported by the priest.
When discussing this point, Manuel has a
ready argument: "Do you have cargos in
Mexico City? You don't have them
there, but people are still good Catholics."

[783] Myths and experiences with the super-
natural are usually believed, and some-
times even wonder stories, but the attitude
of doubt described before is also found.

Although agraristas or radicals dismiss folk beliefs as superstitions, the prevalent pattern by which folk beliefs disappear is not through lack of belief but by some sort of explanation within the accepted ideology as to why behavior based on the disappearing belief is not found any more. Thus we see in belief the same trend as in the cult, where the tendency is toward a more orthodox Catholicism. Examples follow:

539 In Zopoco there are no rich men because the town Christ "does not allow the *japíngua* to operate", i. e., compacts with the Devil.

• • • •

754 Jarácuaro used to be famous as a center of
778 witchcraft. Prospective witches entered a cave
behind the Church to make a compact with
538 the Devil and learn their art. The present lack
of witches is attributed to the fact that the
entrance to the cave has been covered: "Form-
erly there were witches because God allowed
it. Now he stopped it. What there are now are
some magicians who learn in books, but God
does not allow many of them. Otherwise with
so many books as there are, there would be
many magicians and all of them would be
causing evil."

• • • •

776 Elves are no longer seen because the Pope
539 condemned them together with other devils to
go back to hell; and they have not been seen
thereafter.

• • • •

821 In Cocucho there were many thunderstorms
539 over a certain mountain. "A priest went and
blessed a cave in the mountain. A thunder-
783 storm destroyed the cave. They said many
people were seen leaving the mountain; they

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prevented the Tarascans from helping Montezuma when he sought additional support against Cortez. Consequently, the Spaniards were able to conquer the Aztec and Tarascan empires separately.

In the legends will be found specific references to some of these historic events and to places located on the accompanying maps (Figs. 1-2). These tales explain some of the natural features of the Tarascan countryside. Frequently, political history is combined with natural history.

Except for references to the four cardinal directions in the first legend and to omens and dreams predicting the coming of the Spaniards in the last two tales, there is no similarity between these Tarascan legends and those of other Indian groups of Mexico.

COLLECTION OF THE LEGENDS

The Tarascan legends and folk tales presented in this paper are a select few of those secured in 1953 by the author and his wife while he was Visiting Professor of History at the University of Michoacán in Morelia, Mexico. They were collected in the villages of Indians who still use the pre-Conquest language and speak of themselves as *Purépecha* rather than as Tarascans.

The etymology of the word "Tarascan" is disputed. The traditional explanation, probably correct, is that the conquistadores took Indian women as wives or concubines and were called *Tarascué* (son-in-law) by the fathers of the girls. Thinking that the term was the name of the tribe, the Spaniards referred to all as *Tarascos* (Foster, 1948, p. 9).

The legend of creation was told in the barrio of Santa Maria in Morelia by Ignacia Peña, a full-blooded Tarascan *serviente* (housemaid) with a third-grade education; the story of the tribal journey to Michoacán was given in Copula by Luis Espinosa, a meztizo with a secondary education, who specializes in pottery making; the tale of Tacamba was told by Fidelia Perez, a full-blooded Tarascan woman with no formal education, in the pueblo of San Gerónimo on the northern shore of Lake Pátzcuaro; the legend of Lake Cuitzeo was a collective effort by several natives

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were the four orbs residing in the heavens.

Huriata daily glittered in the sky, but the Purépecha represented him symbolically with three concentric circles which signified his union with the moon at the moment they created Cueróhperi. The lovely daughter of wisdom, Cueróhperi, was represented as standing nude with her long hair gathered in the form of a crown, with her hands resting beneath her breasts offering perpetual nourishment, and with her womb always ready to give forth fruit. In her they saw nature, to whose immutable laws all things are obedient.

Dance of the Viejitos

Related to the above legend is the still famous Dance of the Viejitos (little old men). It has its origins in the ancient past, but how old it is no one knows. Such a dance existed before the days of the Conquest, and the influence of the legend of creation is discernible in it.

The dancers of the Tarascan villages around Lake Pátzcuaro (Fig. 1) carry heavy staffs with an animal's head carved on the handle. They wear white cotton trousers, tunics with red sashes tied at the side, wide-brimmed hats with low crowns, and painted wooden masks depicting old faces.

The musician directs the dancing *viejitos*, usually youths, who dance collectively and individually, each trying to outdo the other in steps and clowning. In one of their serious figures, called "the cross of the four stars," the dancers form four files, each pointing in one of the cardinal directions. The four stars presumably represent the four orbs within which was the abode of Curicaueri.

In the little village of Petamba, sometimes as many as forty *viejitos* take part. One dancer wears a mask of a pretty white face, symbolic of Cutzi, the moon goddess (Locke, 1956, p. 372, illustrates this mask). The dancers form two files and each one dances with the woman wearing the white mask; then they form a great circle around her; next, in pairs, they pay reverential respect to

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ancient art of guitar making has aided in the preservation of folk songs and possibly folk tales.

The Legend

The pretty Tzintzin, the modest and genteel priestess of the sun, unwittingly tantalized the young Tarascan warriors with her deep red lips and brilliant black eyes. As was her custom, she went out one day with her empty jar on her shoulder to obtain some water from the fountain.

The Tarascan region was famed for its beautiful young maidens. However, among handsome young men it was the mention of Tzintzin's name that inspired the most ardent emotions, wild desires, and impossible aspirations – impossible because her heart already had been given to a young huntsman. The fortunate youth was the elegant Quanicoti, the best hunter and warrior in the kingdom. He wore the most beautiful skins and feathers in Paracho.

The souls of the young priestess and hunter were united in love as pure as the fragrance of flowers, as clean as the breath of spring. However, their devotion was as impetuous as the rushing waterfall in the Tzaráracua stream, falling in multicolored ribbons as in homage to the gods.

That afternoon as Tzintzin walked through the forest, her lover awaited to offer her the prettiest flower in the meadow and to help her carry the water home. Upon sighting one another, the eternal dialogue of love, the same in all ages and all languages, began its course.

As usual, time passed rapidly without the two lovers noting the lowering of Father Sun in his course through the sky. Always such tardiness evoked reproaches from Tzintzin's venerable parents. This afternoon the lovers were so engrossed in words of love that Father Sun approached the horizon and hid behind a rose-colored cloud. Gently the song of the nightingale fell upon the ears of the happy couple. Tzintzin gazed lovingly upon her lover as he left her.

Suddenly, in anguish, Tzintzin realized that the time had